



Presentation IV of V

COBIA: Amendment 20B & Cobia Closure

HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?



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Cobia Q&A Meeting: May 9, 2016

REVISED 5/3/16 (see **green text on slide #2 & #4**)

Cobia Management: AM 20B (2014)

- **AM 20B(2014)** – regs eff. 3/1/15; implement SEDAR/SSC values;
2 migratory groups: TX->FLEC & GA->NY; kept **92%**
Rec/**82%**Com based on 50% 2000-08 & 50% 2006-08;
MSY=808,000 lbs; OFL = 760,000 for 2015 & 730,000 lbs 2016
and beyond
 - ACL=ABC=OY= 690,000 in 2015 & 670,000 lbs 2016 onwards
 - Rec ACL= 630,000 (2015) & 620,000 lbs 2016 onwards
 - Rec ACT= 520,000 (2015) & 500,000 lbs 2016 onwards
 - Com ACL = 60,000 (2015) & 50,000 lbs 2016 onwards
 - AM no change: Com AM = track & close; payback if overfished & C > total ACL; Rec AM = if Rec & Total ACL exceeded shorten season; use 1 year then avg. 2, then avg. 3 **unless ACL changed & restart**; payback if overfished and C > total ACL
 - Continue with 33"FL & 2/p/d w/1 day limit & landed intact



Cobia Management: AM 20B(2014)

- **AM 20B (effective 3/1/15)** – catch monitoring; How did we do?
http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/acl_monitoring/

	Rec ACL	Rec Catch	Com ACL	Com Catch	Closure
2015 GA-NY (ATLANTIC)	630,000	1,541,575	60,000	53,364	Rec 2016 Season to be shorted
2015 E. FL (GULF)	830,000	372,118	70,000	53,255	
2016 GA-NY (ATLANTIC)	620,000	-	50,000	5,410	Fed Rec Closes 6/20/16
2016 E. FL (GULF)	860,000	-	70,000	17,472	



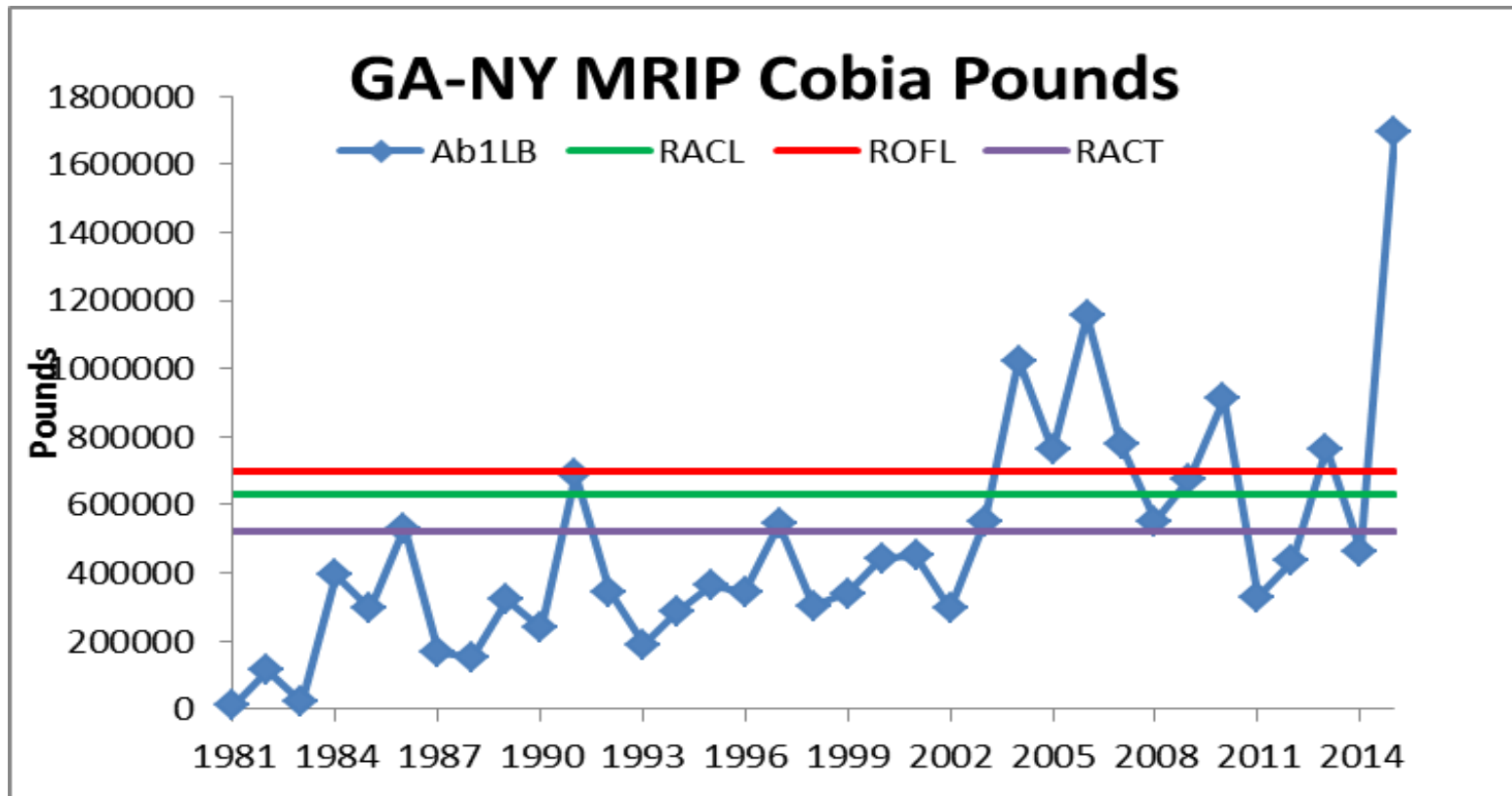
Why taking action?

- Rec ACL decreased from 1,445,687 lbs (FL Keys->NY) to 630,000 lbs (2015; GA->NY) based on new stock ID and SEDAR 28/SSC ABC results
- Rec Catch GA->NY = 1,540,775 lbs in 2015 = **145**~~129~~% over the Rec ACL and over Total ACL
- Accountability Measures triggered and recreational season for 2016 must be shortened to prevent exceeding the 2016 Rec ALC of 620,000 lbs; aiming for ACT of 500,00 lbs to estimate season length; Federal recreational season closes June 20th
- Council is working on Framework to change AMs & bag/size/season to prevent closure in 2017; NOTE: DETAILS IN SEPARATE PRESENTATION
- Council is asking if ASMFC (May 2-5, 2016 meeting) is interested in developing a joint/complementary plan for state waters; pulse fishery with high catches in state waters



How does the 2015 landings spike compare to long-term trends in the fishery?

- The 2015 estimate of landings in MRIP is the highest on record; Hypothetical Rec OFL = 92% OFL



Is there any evidence that the 2015 recreational spike is an anomaly, perhaps related to a spike in landings in a single area or to a substantial change in average weight?

- No evidence that the increase is narrow in range - 2015 landings increased in all states, in pounds as well as in numbers. Type A (observed)+B1 (not observed) numbers were up in 2015 relative to 2014 by 2.9x in GA, 3.6x in SC, 1.6x in NC and 3.4x in VA.

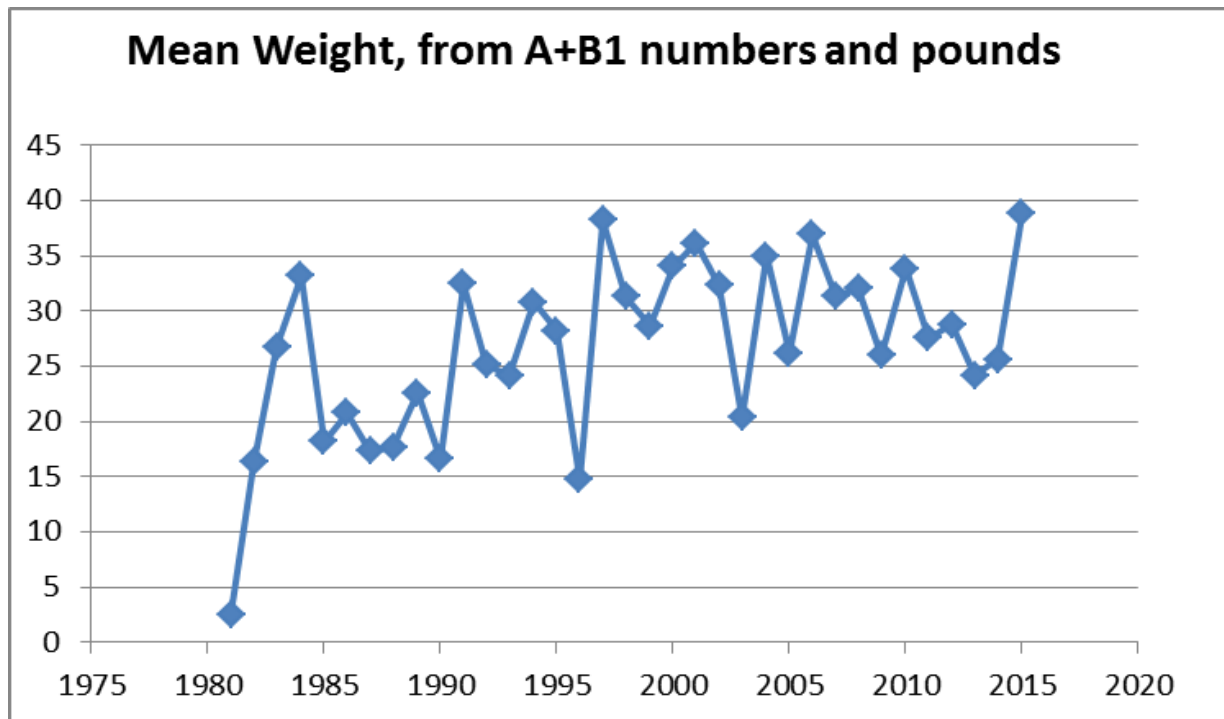
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Year	Target Trips	Successful Trips	Successful %
2014	165,369	40,951	0.25
2015	206,528	60,313	0.29



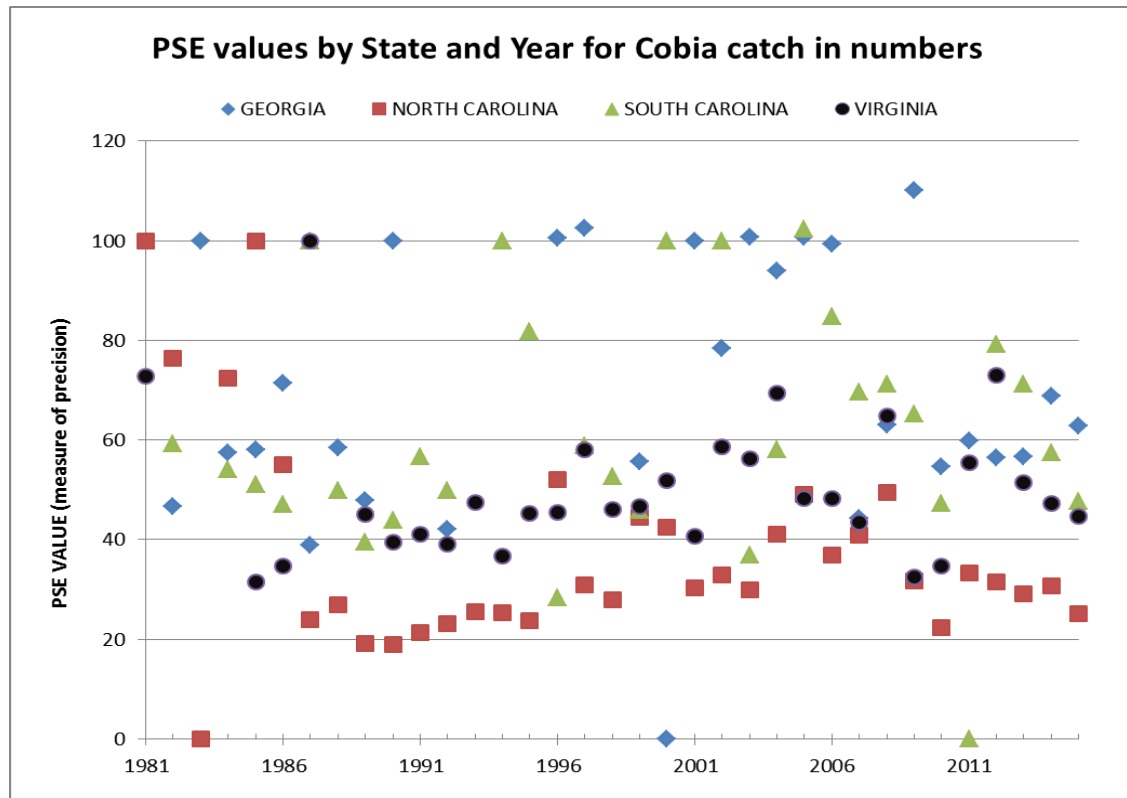
Is there any evidence that the 2015 recreational spike is an anomaly, perhaps related to a spike in landings in a single area or to a substantial change in average weight?

- There is indication of a slightly higher mean weight in 2015.
- 2015 mean weight is high, but this does not appear to be the sole explanation for the increased landings.



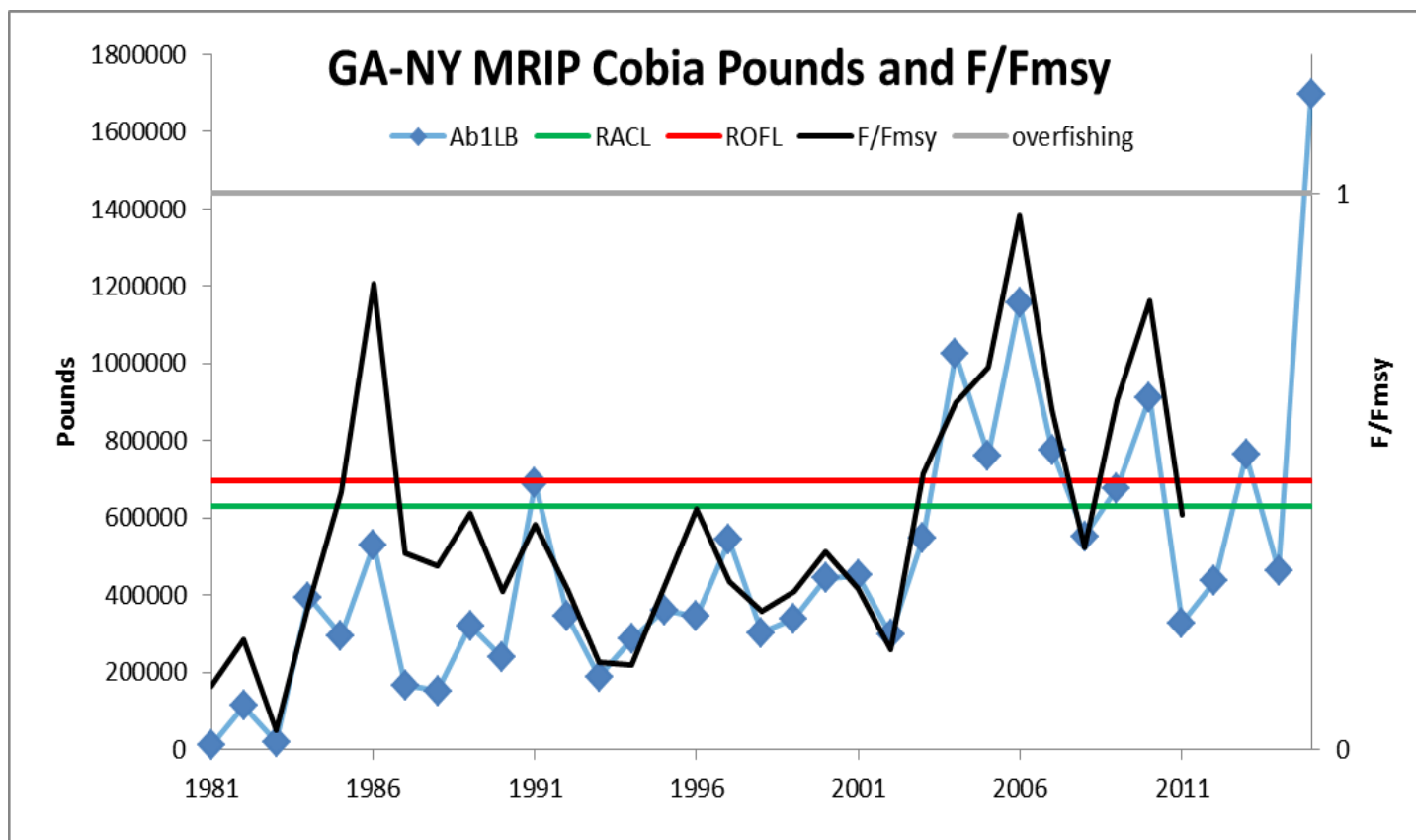
Is there any evidence that the 2015 recreational catch estimate is particularly uncertain?

- No evidence of an increase in Percent Squared Error (PSE) in 2015. PSE = measure of statistical uncertainty & error in the estimation that is calculated to be compared across species regardless of catch or frequency in survey.



Did overfishing occur during 2004-2010, when there are numerous years of landings exceeding the estimated Rec OFL?

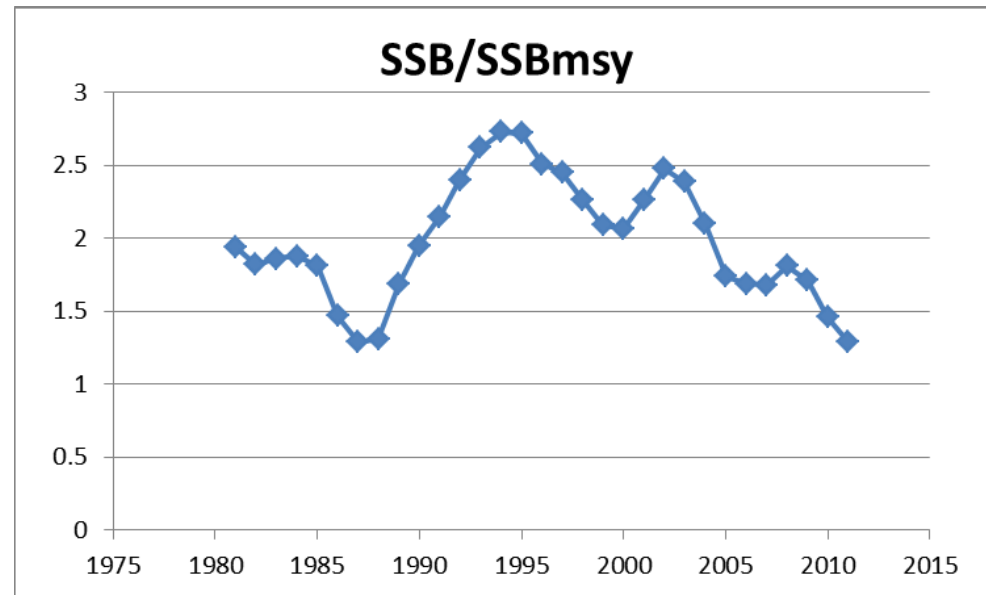
- The stock assessment did not show a period when overfishing occurred. May seem counterintuitive since landings > benchmarks & MSY but “fishing down” high biomass temporarily.



Did overfishing occur during 2004-2010, when there are numerous years of landings exceeding the estimated Rec OFL?

- 1990s SSB was as much as 2.5 times SSB/SSBmsy, and such biomass levels could support short term landings above MSY without leading to excessive exploitation rates. However, removing more than the average the stock can support has a cost, and such action is called “fishing down” because that is exactly what it does to the stock biomass. The effect of landings exceeding MSY are apparent in the declining SSB after the mid 1990’s.

In fact, the terminal estimate from the assessment was the lowest in the time series and was only slightly above SSB msy (SSB/SSBmsy 2011 = 1.29). Over about a 20 year period the stock went from 2.5x SSBmsy to 1.3x SSBmsy. In real terms, this was a 53% decline in SSB.



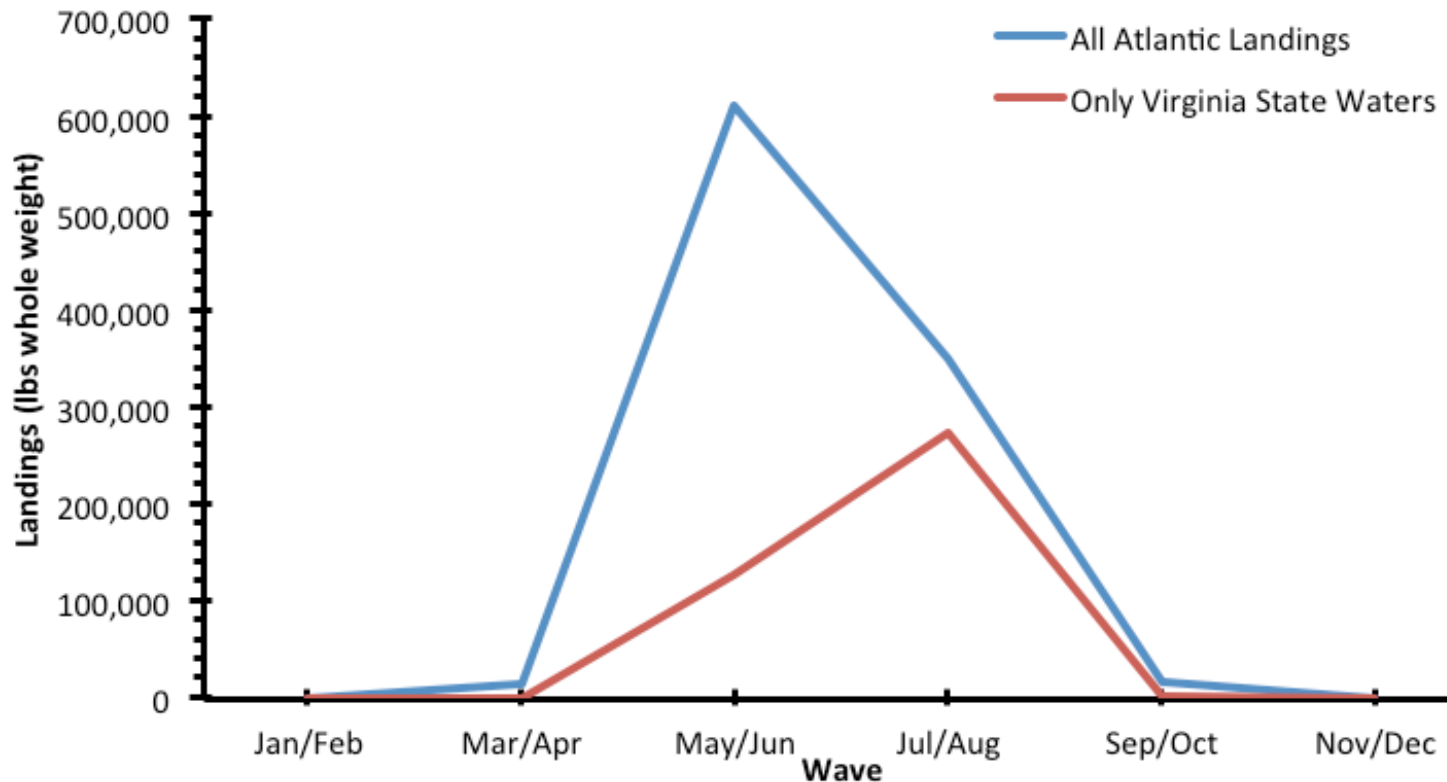
Is there reason for concern and precaution with Cobia?

- It appears so.
- Terminal assessment results indicate declining biomass and peak fishing mortality rates bumping up against the limits.
- Recreational landings for 7 of the last 12 years exceed the hypothetical recreational share (92%) of the equilibrium MSY (808,000 pounds).
- Landings have increased considerably in the last decade, with those from 2004 to 2014 twice those from 1992-2002.
- It seems unlikely that the APAIS calibration (new MRIP sampling methodology) will have enough impact to resolve the ACL overage.
- Based on the use of landings relative to OFL as a measure of overfishing for years since the terminal assessment year, overfishing occurred in 2015.



Can we prevent a closure in 2017?

- Council is modifying AM; DETAILS IN SEPARATE PRESENTATION
- Seasonal issue



Can we prevent a closure in 2017?

- Preliminary analyses for VA & NC state waters show **VESSEL**/size limits can prevent closure
- Assumes VA regs changes implemented 5/1 & NC 5/23
- Any new regs in SC/GA/Federal could potentially extend season

Both Size Limit and Vessel Limit Combined		Closure Date
Fork Length	Vessel Limit	
35	2	27-Jun
35	1	30-Jun
37	2	28-Jun
37	1	3-Jul
40	2	3-Jul
40	1	15-Jul
45	2	3-Aug
45	1	No Closure

